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FM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8051
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 4824
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE 1928
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE 1936
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 1198
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1562
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0964
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 0780
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0874
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 0829
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0780
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 PESHAWAR 000128

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: ARRESTS, DEATHS OF TNSM LEADERS UNDERLINE GROUP'S
IRRELEVANCE

REF: PESHAWAR 34

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate
Peshawar, U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: The arrests of several key members of the Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat-i-Mohammedi (TNSM) and subsequent deaths of two of the arrested members has brought TNSM briefly back into the spotlight, but in a very different role than it played earlier this year. The way TNSM handled the denouement and subsequent collapse of the Swat peace deal it had brokered has left the group devoid of support from the Pakistani government, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Swat, and the religious parties in the NWFP. TNSM leader Sufi Mohammad is in poor health, his traditional base of support in Lower Dir has been under government attack, and his lieutenants have for the most part gone to ground. The government roundup of the TNSM leadership appears aimed at tying up loose ends; the lack of party or popular reaction to the roundup points out the group's current irrelevance. End summary.

Arrests and Deaths Provoke Comment but Not Reaction

12. (C) On June 4, the government of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) government announced that TNSM deputy chief Maulana Alam, spokesman Amir Izzat, and local leader Maulana Wahab had been arrested in a military sweep in Amandara, in Malakand district. The announcement, initially denied by the Pakistani military, was definitively confirmed on June 6, when a Pakistani army convoy carrying the captured TNSM leaders toward Peshawar was attacked by an IED and small-arms fire and Alam and Izzat were killed along with a Pakistani soldier. The Pakistani armed forces' spokesman Major General Athar Abbas confirmed the deaths and admitted that Wahab was also in military custody; he denied a TNSM statement that TNSM leader Sufi Mohammad was also in Pakistani military custody. Consulate contacts, however,

tell us that Sufi Mohammad has been in the custody of the Pakistani government for most of the past two weeks. On June 9, the Pakistani government arrested Swat TNSM chief Iqbal Khan.

13. (SBU) The Pakistani press carried considerable speculation as to the identities and intentions of the June 6 attackers. NWFP Information Minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain blamed the TTP for the attack; TTP spokesman Muslim Khan blamed the government. A third theory, advocated by some Consulate contacts, was that the attack was a rescue attempt by TNSM members that had inadvertently led to the deaths of the leaders whose rescue was being attempted. Press reported that around a thousand people attended the funeral for the two men, despite the short notice and the curfew.

Coinciding Interests No Longer

14. (S/NF) The government's claim that the TNSM leaders had been killed by TTP personnel was leant credibility by persistent reports since the February peace deal that TNSM leadership felt under threat from the TTP. At a local level, leaders of militias loosely affiliated with the TNSM have clashed with militias affiliated with the TTP. In the Mahmoond area of Bajaur on June 7, for instance, a TNSM-affiliated militia led by Salar Masood clashed with Faqir Mohammad's TTP-affiliated militia, reportedly a turf battle over the revenues from extortion; four militants were reported killed. (Note: Faqir Mohammad has had a long affiliation with TNSM in Bajaur, but

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over the past year and a half has increasingly identified himself with Tehrik-i-Taliban aims and goals. There have been hints off and on of a power struggle within TNSM/Bajaur which may be intensifying with Sufi Mohammad in custody again.) Sufi Mohammad, reportedly in poor health, has been incommunicado even to his deputies for stretches of several days at a time; his principal lieutenants have also largely gone to ground, leaving local leaders to make their own decisions.

15. (C) With the collapse of the Swat peace deal at the beginning of May (if not before), the Pakistani government appears to have written off Sufi Mohammad's TNSM as a political force to be feared or manipulated. NWFP officials had told Consulate that they were engaging Sufi Mohammad and the TNSM because of their perceived potential effectiveness in restraining the activities of the TTP in Swat (reftel). The behavior of TTP militants in Swat after the peace deal was signed in February, combined with Sufi Mohammad's unwillingness even to condemn militant violations of the accord, showed this perception to be in error.

Sufi Mohammad's attempt to dictate the terms of implementation of the Nizam-i-Adl regulation demonstrated that he would not be helpful to the government even in this respect. As the peace agreement broke down in early May, Sufi Mohammad went into hiding; government forces subsequently showed little restraint in targeting the area of Maidan in Lower Dir, where Sufi Mohammed had based himself and his family. When a Pakistani military bombardment in early May destroyed Sufi Mohammad's house and killed his oldest son, there was no significant response from the TNSM or the community.

16. (C) As the Swat peace accord was announced in February, religious parties such as Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam - Fazlur Rehman (JUI-F) rallied around the TNSM and its role in forming the Nizam-i-Adl (shari'a) regulation,

which they praised as a good model for implementation of shari'a nationwide. JI and the Deobandi-based JUI-F, traditionally strong in the Malakand division, had significant ties with the TNSM leadership - many of whom, like Sufi Mohammad, were Deobandis and former JI members. The NWFP government, recognizing this, relied heavily on government officials with ties to the religious parties in their negotiations.

¶7. (C) Sufi Mohammad, however, agreed to a version of Nizam-i-Adl that eliminated a source of religious party patronage (septel). He then chose the moment of his greatest triumph - the signing and passage of the Nizam-i-Adl regulation - to embarrass the religious parties in widely-viewed interviews on two of Pakistan's private TV channels in early May. In these interviews, Sufi Mohammad declared that democracy was "kufr" (infidelity) and denounced JI's Qazi Hussain Ahmad and JUI-F's Maulana Fazlur Rehman for their support of the democratic process, saying he did not "even offer prayers with pro-democracy people." Former NWFP Health Minister and JI member Inayatullah Khan and other Consulate contacts in religious parties generally reacted wearily to news of the June 6 deaths of TNSM leaders, expressing their regret but adding that the killings were not particularly significant.

Comment

¶8. (C) Aside from speculation as to the identity and motives of the June 6 attackers, the reaction in NWFP to the effective

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decapitation of the TNSM has been a collective yawn and a few crocodile tears from the religious parties. While the organization still seems to have some drawing power in certain localities of Lower Dir and Malakand districts, it has clearly outlived its utility (for the moment at least) to the government, TTP, and Islamic parties - entities whose competing and coinciding interests had elevated the group to the position of prominence it held earlier this year. For the near- to medium-term, the Pakistani press's use of the adjective "defunct" to describe the organization seems to be apt. End comment.

TRACY